

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 040399 TOSEC 040104

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S/S - MR. MOFFAT

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CHEROKEE FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SONNENFELDT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.); PARM; UR; US

SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS OF GELB'S PIECE ON SALT

REF: SECTO 4044

1. AS YOU REQUESTED, THERE FOLLOWS MY ANALYSIS OF THE
GELB PIECE IN THE FEBRUARY 17 NEW YORK TIMES.

2. I HAD TRIED TO TELEPHONE YOU AS SOON AS I SAW THE PIECE
TO BE SURE YOU HAD SEEN IT SINCE IT STRUCK ME AS ANOTHER
DAMAGING LEAK, NOT SO MUCH ON SUBSTANCE AS IN ITS IMPLICA-
TIONS CONCERNING YOU. MUCH OF THE BASIC INFORMATION IN
THE ARTICLE, CORRECT, INCORRECT, HALF-TRUE, DISTORTED OR
INCOMPLETE, OBVIOUSLY COMES FROM MATERIAL TO WHICH GELB
HAS HAD ACCESS FOR SOME WEEKS PAST, INCLUDING PARTICULARLY
THE TIME BEFORE THE PRESIDENT ISSUED HIS WARNING ABOUT
LEAKS ON FEBRUARY 11. IN SOME SENSE THIS ARTICLE CAN BE
SAID TO REFLECT SYMPATHY FOR REASONABLE SALT EFFORTS; IN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 040399 TOSEC 040104

THAT SENSE IT BITES THE HAND THAT FED GELB HIS BASIC

INFORMATION. BUT THE ARTICLE ALSO MAKES YOU OUT AS TALKING OUT OF BOTH SIDES OF YOUR MOUTH AND CLEARLY SEEKS TO EMBROIL YOU WITH RUMSFELD, IF NOT INDEED THE PRESIDENT, FOR HAVING APPOINTED RUMSFELD. SO, GELB REMAINS GELB.

3. THE ARTICLE IS A REHASH OF THE VARIOUS LEAKS WHICH BEGAN IN EARLY JANUARY AND CULMINATED AFTER YOUR MOSCOW TRIP WHEN VARIOUS VERSIONS OF THE JANUARY 13 NSC MEETING WERE PUT OUT TOGETHER WITH PARTISAN ACCOUNTS OF THE JANUARY 19 NSC MEETING ON THE DAY OF YOUR DEPARTURE FOR MOSCOW. WHILE GELB DOES NOT MENTION SPECIFICALLY THE RUMP NSC WHILE YOU WERE IN MOSCOW, SOME OF THE INFORMATION IN THE ARTICLE IS DRAWN FROM YOUR REPORTING MESSAGE WHICH WAS DISCUSSED AT THAT MEETING. GELB'S ACCOUNT OF WHERE THINGS STOOD AT THE END OF THE MOSCOW VISIT IS DRAWN FROM THE MANY STORIES PRINTED IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING, BUT OBVIOUSLY HE HAS TALKED TO SOME INSIDERS. ONE FAVORABLE ELEMENT IS THAT GELB DOES NOT REPEAT THE SCURRILOUS CHARGE THAT YOU DISOBEYED THE PRESIDENT'S INSTRUCTIONS IN MOSCOW.

4. THE OPENING TWO PARAGRAPHS REFER TO A "COMPROMISE POSITION" IN RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET POSITION IN MOSCOW. THIS LEAD IS ONLY A TEASE AS NOWHERE DOES GELB PURPORT TO DESCRIBE THE ELEMENTS OF THE "COMPROMISE POSITION."

5. THE REFERENCES TO YOUR WARNING THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF A REAGAN OR JACKSON VICTORY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME WARNING THE JCS OF WHAT A DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION OR CONGRESS WILL DO TO THE DOD BUDGET, ARE, OF COURSE, TYPICALLY MISCHIEVOUS.

6. THE PARAGRAPHS DESCRIBING THE BACKFIRE AND SURFACE SHIP CRUISE MISSILES -- WITH YOU ALLEGEDLY PREPARED "TO BEND" ON THE FORMER AND LIMIT THE LATTER TO A FEW SHIPS -- DEMONSTRATE THAT GELB WAS UNAWARE OF OUR CURRENT POSITION WHEN HE WROTE THIS PIECE.

7. THE SEVERAL PARAGRAPHS FOLLOWING THE HEADING "VERIFICATION THE KEY ISSUE" ARE REHASHES OF OLD STORIES.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 040399 TOSEC 040104

8. THE NEXT HEADING, "AGENCY SIDES WITH PENTAGON," PURPORTS TO DESCRIBE THE BUREAUCRATIC POSITIONS OF ACDA, RUMSFELD, JACKSON, AND KENNEDY. IT BUILDS ON GOSSIP.

9. UNDER THE NEXT HEADING GELB SETS THE STAGE FOR HIS VERSION OF THE JANUARY 13 NSC MEETING AND THE FOUR OPTIONS. HE IS EVIDENTLY DRAWING ON DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION

TO WHICH HE WAS GIVEN ACCESS EARLIER THIS MONTH. GELB'S ACCOUNT OF OPTIONS 1, 3, AND 4 IS LARGELY ACCURATE EXCEPT THAT HE ASCRIBES POSSIBLE REDUCTIONS ONLY TO OPTION 3, WHEN IN FACT THE OPTIONS PAPER STATED THAT REDUCTIONS COULD BE CONSIDERED UNDER ANY OF THE OPTIONS. GELB PASSES OVER OPTION 2 WHICH LEADS ME TO CONCLUDE THAT HE REALLY HAS BEEN TOLD ONLY ABOUT THE OPTIONS BROUGHT FORWARD FOR THE JANUARY 19 NSC MEETING, BY WHICH POINT OPTION 2 HAD BEEN DROPPED FROM THE TABLE.

10. GELB CITES THE RUMSFELD MEMO EXPRESSING HIS AND THE JCS' PREFERENCE FOR OPTION 4. I HAVE HEARD NO FURTHER SPECULATION WHERE HE GOT HOLD OF THIS BUT STILL ASSUME IT WAS AT THE PENTAGON.

11. GELB GIVES SCANT COVERAGE TO THE JANUARY 19 NSC MEETING FOLLOWING WHICH THE PRESIDENT GAVE YOU YOUR INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOSCOW. GELB RATHER MOVES TO AN ACCOUNT OF THE MOSCOW TALKS. GELB HAS AN ILLOGICAL DISTORTION THAT AFTER 1982 BACKFIRE WOULD RUN FREE BUT THAT "DOES NOT TROUBLE" YOU SINCE THE SOVIETS ARE BUILDING ONLY TWO EACH MONTH (SIC). IN HIS DESCRIPTION OF LIMITS ON SURFACE SHIP CRUISE MISSILES AS DISCUSSED IN MOSCOW, GELB IS APPARENTLY UNAWARE THAT OPTION 3 HAD BEEN MODIFIED FOR THE JANUARY 19 MEETING TO INCLUDE A NUMERICAL LIMIT OF 50 OR SO PLATFORMS WHICH COULD ALSO INCLUDE A LIMIT OF 10-15 LAUNCHERS PER SHIP.

12. THE ACCOUNT OF "ISSUES VIRTUALLY RESOLVED" IS INCOMPLETE BUT GELB IS BASICALLY CORRECT IN WHAT HE HAS. THE ELEMENTS OF HIS REVIEW HAVE ALL BEEN IN PREVIOUS PRESS ACCOUNTS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 040399 TOSEC 040104

13. IN CONCLUSION, THIS IS A DISJOINTED AND PARTIAL ACCOUNT. IT FAILS TO LEAD UP TO ITS TEASE HEADLINE AND LEAD PARAGRAPHS. IT REVEALS LITTLE BUT GOSSIP AND 3 OF THE 4 OPTIONS DISCUSSED JANUARY 13, SAVE FOR THE SUR-

FACING OF THE RUMSFELD MEMO.

14. IT IS HARD TO JUDGE THE IMPACT OF THIS ARTICLE ON THE SALT PROCESS AND ON THE PROSPECTS FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS IT WAS PROBABLY LARGELY LOST IN THE NOISE AND I WOULD GUESS IS MOSTLY AN EGO TRIP FOR GELB TO SHOW HOW MUCH HE KNOWS. ON THE OTHER HAND IT DOES PROBABLY HURT THE PROCESS SINCE IT ONCE AGAIN PURSUES IN PUBLIC PRINT ISSUES THAT HAD BEST BEEN KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AT THIS CRITICAL MOMENT. INCIDENTALLY, THE ONLY SALT STORY I

HAVE SEEN FROM YOUR PARTY WAS THIS MORNING'S BEARISH,
UNSIGNED PIECE FROM LIMA. INGERSOLL

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